

Headline	Getting that first job		
MediaTitle	New Sunday Times		
Date	21 Aug 2016	Language	English
Circulation	74,711	Readership	240,000
Section	Learning Curves	Color	Full Color
Page No	4	ArticleSize	652 cm ²
AdValue	RM 22,389	PR Value	RM 67,167



Getting that first job

SMART MOVES: Fresh graduates and newly minted employees tell of their experiences



DOING things for the first time is never an easy process — likewise landing that first job after graduating from college or university.

For some, the transition between completing one's studies and going on to the working world is smooth-sailing but others may find it a bumpy road.

Not too clear on what she wanted for her future, 23-year-old Soo Jin Li feels blessed that the guidance and encouragement from her father had her on the right footing.

Having graduated last year with a Bachelor in Accounting & Finance degree, Soo sent out resumes two weeks after her last paper and landed a job in the third week.

"My dad's advice was: as a fresh graduate, just take the job to gain experience, don't look too much into the salary as long as they are paying you the market rate. I chose the company with the most potential to learn from, a growing company that was in need of employees so I didn't need to wait for long."

As an analyst at a service centre, Soo said she earns slightly less than her friends but she wouldn't switch jobs with them. "Don't expect a high salary, just aim for opportunities to prove your worth and find companies where you have potential to learn and grow," she said.

For dentist Jessica Tan, 27, it took a lot of soul searching as well as trial and error before she got into the degree programme that brought her to her current job. A science stream student during secondary school, she opted to do arts at a private college — but that didn't last and she switched back to science.

"When I finished college, I applied to do accounting and finance in university. I did that with the intention of moving to Australia. After I graduated, I realised that accountancy was not for me because I'm a people person. I consulted my family and chose to do dentistry. Once I started, I didn't turn back. I felt that

I had made the best choice for myself and my future," she said. Tan graduated in 2013.

"Know yourself, know what you want, know what you're in for, and you're good to go," is the lesson 24-year-old occupational therapist Fatimah A. Amir has to offer.

After identifying her interest in working with children in need of therapy, she enrolled in the Bachelor of Occupational Therapy (Hons) programme at University Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) where she graduated from in 2014.

"I began thinking of what to look for in a job back during practical placements and internships that were part of my training. I also had a job over semester breaks that was relevant to my interests. These experiences were crucial in helping me decide on a job," she related.

Fatimah had a chance meeting with a former colleague from the workplace she spent her semester breaks at before sitting for her final exams.

"We spent some time at a conference together, after which she invited me to send my CV in for a vacancy. I got the job the day I handed in my thesis — which meant I wasn't even sure if I were graduating yet! My new employers then were well aware of that, of course. Work started a month after the job offer was made, around the time my exam results were released," she said.

Not gaining entry into the university of one's choice shouldn't deter one's will to advance. In fact, it could lead to a discovery of a new interest that leads to a suitable first job.

That was the case for Amira Muin, 24, who graduated with a Bachelor of Chemical Engineering Technology (Hons) in Food degree last year.

After being rejected by a public university, she went with her gut feeling to pursue the programme. "I chose it merely because it felt right, and not because it had anything to do with my ambition," she said.

The final semester before graduating, Amira and her coursemates were required to complete a six-week internship. She was then offered a job.

"I was placed under the sales support team. After about three months there, my former boss offered me a position. After much thought as well as advice from my parents, I decided to accept the offer because I knew how challenging it is to secure a job these days. I completed the internship in early May and I started my first job two weeks after. My graduation ceremony was not until September," said Amira.

The business process associate at OSK Holdings highlighted that sometimes passion for work is developed over time as one gets better at what one does.

But some are not so successful in landing a proper first job.

Take Mohd Shafiq Hazwan Zainoor Liza who possesses a Bachelor of International Affairs Management (Hons) degree from Universiti Utara Malaysia. Despite having graduated in 2014 after an internship at the Perlis State Economic Planning Unit, he has yet to gain permanent employment. He is now doing administrative work at his father's fish farm while looking for a job.

"I began looking for a job after my internship — there was no examination in my final semester. I have since learned that improving soft skills and value-adding one's worth like learning a third language is something that every final-year student should be looking into. My current line of action is to improve my weakness which is self-confidence, by attending seminars and reading motivational books," said Mohd Shafiq.

Likewise, 24-year-old Muhammad Rusdi Muhammad who recently graduated with a Honours degree in Business Administration (marketing) and not for the lack of trying.

After attending career fairs and sending online job applications, Muhammad Rusdi has attended over 12 interviews with different companies around Klang Valley.

"I guess I don't have the lucky charm. Hence, I've started to join any flexible, part-time and temporary jobs for the sake of survival. I view the jobs that I've done as platforms for me to go further in future.

Headline	Getting that first job		
MediaTitle	New Sunday Times		
Date	21 Aug 2016	Language	English
Circulation	74,711	Readership	240,000
Section	Learning Curves	Color	Full Color
Page No	4	ArticleSize	652 cm ²
AdValue	RM 22,389	PR Value	RM 67,167

That way, I feel more confident and motivated to forge ahead," he said.

For some, it is about going back to the drawing board. Khairul Najmi Mohd Nazari, 25, a business executive at Media Prima Bhd's Group Corporate Planning department, decided to join UiTM's Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) (Marketing) after receiving an electrical engineering diploma from UiTM's Penang campus.

"I took up engineering because I liked physics but through my diploma years, I found that it takes more than that to make it in an engineering career. With that, after self-reflection, I decided to pursue a degree in business based on my capability and passion. There, I enjoyed studying and participating in activities, received a few awards and was also named UiTM Kelantan's best student (as at Jan 2015)," he said.

Khairul Najmi started looking for a job after he received results from his last semester in July. "I sent resumes to several companies, attended as many organised career fairs that I could go to. It took me about almost two months before I got my first full-time job at Media Prima."

Ali Hakim Hamzah, 25, is completing a Bachelor's degree in communication arts at KDU University in Glenmarie, Shah Alam. He had earlier graduated with a Diploma in Business Management in 2011.

"It was my parents' suggestion that I take up business studies. Lit-

tle did I know that communications was my forte," he said.

For his first job after getting his diploma, Ali applied for an administrative position, but his would-be employers decided he would do better as a sales executive.

"The job I had was interesting because as a fresh graduate, one is in the stage where new experience — be it good or bad is exciting. During training, I was put behind a desk in a cubicle and I thought to myself that this job is challenging. Not because of the workload but by being idle and waiting for senior staff to train me. Once that was done, I was meeting clients, solving issues, and going to new places to meet with clients," he said.

Three months into the job, Ali was offered a position in Shell to do customer service (communications).

"I believe it is not the qualification that you hold that decides if you get the job or not. But how you present yourself to the employers. The paper qualification you bring only shows that you are able to take instructions and that you don't have a learning disability. But it all boils down to the character you have and portray to people. Don't just put all your focus on getting good grades. Build yourself by having a holistic development of having professionalism, leadership qualities and good character."

Ali is currently studying for a degree full-time. A degree, he said, would put him in a better position for a more robust career advance-

ment.

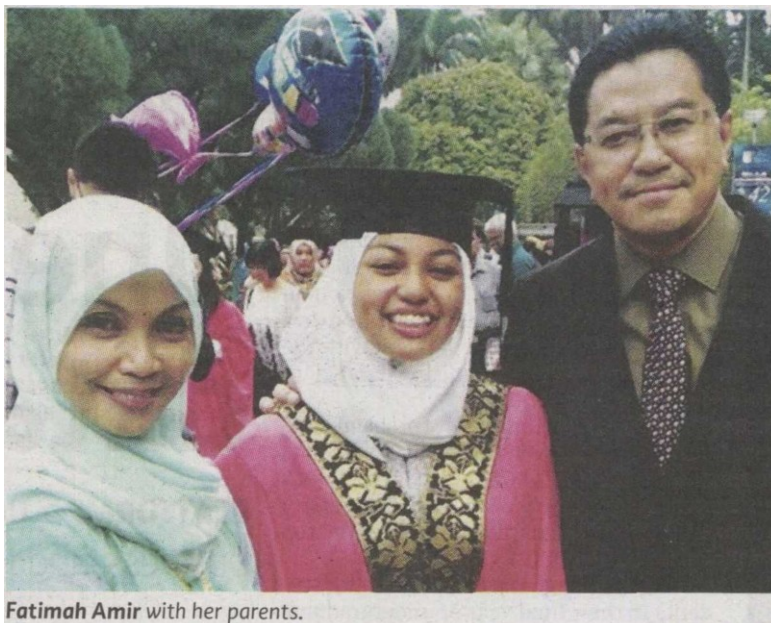
This is the second of a four-part series on job hunting for fresh graduates. Watch out for tips on preparing a resume and attending job interviews next.



Soo Jin Li



Khairul Najmi Mohd Nazari



Fatimah Amir with her parents.